

## FaDSS Guidance– Electronic Searches of Family Members

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### Purpose

According to FaDSS policy 7.0- Technology, grantees are prohibited from conducting electronic searches of prospective and participating FaDSS families except for compelling reasons with prior consent from families, or in emergencies. This guidance seeks to clarify requirements of grantees when conducting any electronic search of prospective or participating FaDSS families.

### General Information

Examples of electronic searches include but are not limited to:

- “Googling” a family member
- Conducting a background check through the Department of Human Services
- Conducting a check of the State or National sex offender registry
- Conducting a search on Iowa Courts Online
- Searching for the family member on any database or website, including apps and social media

Grantee agencies may adopt internal practices to obtain information on prospective and participating family members **only** when informed consent can be ensured and clearly outlined in agency policies and procedures.

If a grantee agency adopts a practice or allows staff the discretion to conduct a search of a family member, the grantee must first obtain informed consent from the family member prior to conducting the search. The requirement for obtaining informed consent must be clearly outlined in agency policies and procedures and monitored by the grantee to ensure compliance.

Documentation of the communication with the family member and the informed consent must be clearly recorded in the family record. The outcome or information obtained through an electronic search must be discussed with the prospective or participating family member. Documentation of the discussion must be clearly documented in the family record.

Effective: August 17, 2020